

SHADOWS OF HEROES

Chapter 1

Somewhere in the White Sea, near the port of Severodvinsk, Russia, a pair of Soviet destroyers rained thundering depth charges down upon an illegal and unidentified contact submerged below. The Russians bucked and rolled among the waves heaved up by an early 1949 Arctic storm but remained at their tasks with dogged determination.

Hundreds of feet below, USS *Kokanee*, an American diesel-electric powered submarine with nearly depleted storage batteries shuddered as shock waves threatened to rip apart the three-quarter inch steel pressure hull—all that stood between her terrified crew and the ruthless sea.

Silent graves seemed to beckon from the icy depths.

The unwelcome *Kokanee* crept along at dead slow speed near her maximum depth as ominous and terrifying metallic click-clicks, audible through the hull, warned of each new ear-shattering explosion. Too many of these already shook the submarine to her very soul and tossed the crew about like rag dolls. In the Control Room, a depth gage shattered, driving flying glass into the face of the bow planes operator. A brutal shock wave threw him to the deck along with others of the diving control party into a writhing pile of human bodies.

The injured planesman withdrew a bloody hand from his face and cried out hysterically, “Oh God! Get me out of here! Please, dear God, get me out of here.”

“Steady son,” urged the chief-of-the-watch, attempting to calm the lad while recovering his footing at the same time.